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¶1. (U) Summary: This is the South African Environment, Science and Technology Monthly Newsletter, January 2008, Volume 3, Issue 1, prepared by the U.S. Embassy Pretoria, South Africa.

Topics of the newsletter:

- HI-TECH PRAWN FACILITY OPENED IN SA
- SA TO ROLL-OUT GREEN TRAFFIC LIGHTS
- POWER CUTS CREATE CHANCE TO GREEN HOMES

- FLAMES WIPE OUT CAPE FYNBOS

- DIRECTOR GENERAL'S TIES WITH DEAT TO END

- SA PREPARES FOR INSITE 2008

- UNSANITARY BUCKET SYSTEM PHASE-OUT UNDERWAY

End Summary.

HI-TECH PRAWN FACILITY OPENED IN SA

¶2. (U) Sea Ark Afrika, a subsidiary of the Bosasa Group of Companies, has established a pilot project prawn farm at the Coega Industrial Zone in Port Elizabeth. Prawn farming is usually conducted in open-air ponds, which makes the prawns susceptible to diseases and population loss. The new prawn farm, regarded as a first of its kind, is a bio-secured, closed-up facility with regularly-provided, high-quality diets. Water is filtered, which means diseases can be eliminated or minimized. The project was started in 2005 and is expected to be completed in six years at a R9.2 billion (US \$ 1.3 billion) cost. A Sea Ark Afrika official noted that research and development on the project has been conducted both in the U.S. and SA at a cost of \$40 million (US \$ 5.7 million). Sea Ark Afrika President David Wills described the facility as a "sustaining, job-creating and technologically innovating project". Wills said the shrimp farm is expected to create 11,800 jobs directly and over 88,000 indirectly, with 1,000 jobs slots created specifically for women.
SA TO ROLL-OUT GREEN TRAFFIC LIGHTS

¶3. (U) Central Energy Fund (CEF) announced in January that it had committed over \$5.8 million (US \$.8 million) to erect several solar-powered traffic lights at the major intersections in South Africa's cities. CEF CEO Mputumi Damane said CEF's effort will help mitigate the recent series of power cuts and load-shedding, which

have created traffic jams as well as avoidable accidents. Cape Town City municipality erected a solar-powered traffic light pilot project in September 2007, which has proved to be a success. Damane stated that CEF has already identified over 2,000 critical intersections around Johannesburg alone, while other installations are aimed for the cities of Tshwane (Pretoria), Ethekwini (Durban) Port Elizabeth and Nelspruit.

14. (U) Damane advised that the first batch of the imported installation components had already been delivered to South Africa, while the rest of the consignment will arrive at a later date. CEF expects the investment in green traffic lights to exceed \$14.3 million and they are soliciting funds from private investors. Investors in the project could claim up to 150 percent of their invested amount when they submit their next tax returns, according to the CEF CEO.

POWER CUTS CREATE CHANCE TO GREEN HOMES

15. (U) Ecocentric Official Jutta Berns-Mumbi advised that the recent series of power cuts has created an opportunity for people to start investing in the greening of their homes and businesses. Ecocentric, a sustainable and energy efficiency consulting firm, defined a green home as one that is energy and water efficient. Berns-Mumbi said South Africans must diversify their energy sources and consider alternative means to supply power to their homes. She noted that alternative energy is no longer a concern only for environmentally conscious people, but for all individuals and businesses, out of necessity and urgency.

16. (U) Berns-Mumbi advised people to rethink their energy demands, and to begin their greening activities with small steps such as switching off all non-essential appliances when not in use and fitting low-energy bulbs. She added that long-term solutions should include deep energy retrofitting of existing homes and office buildings and remodeling for energy efficiency. Sustainable Energy Africa official Megan Anderson notes that water heating accounts for about 60 percent of total home energy use. Anderson said that a solar water heater is a crucial intervention which could cut

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electricity consumption bills by up to 30 percent per month. Each costs between US \$428 and US \$2,857, depending on the size and quality.

17. (U) South African developer Swish Property Group is spearheading what will be South Africa's first green mixed-use development. Swish, together with developers Madison and Redefine Income Fund, is building the 50,000 m2 project in the city of Cape Town. It will consist of residential studios, loft apartments, office space, as well as shops. Swish says energy will be conserved in the Upper East Side project through the central air conditioning system. Wasted energy from the air conditioning system produces hot air, which is then captured and piped into a central hot water cylinder that heats water to a certain temperature. This means only a small amount of separate energy will be required to ensure the water from the building's taps is hot. In conventional buildings, this hot air goes to waste. Swish CEO Giancarlo Lanfranchi said, "We need to ensure that we don't place more pressure on [electrical and sewer] systems, so we tackle the problem at the source by creating tools within the building to deal with alternative uses for waste and conservation of electricity."

FLAMES WIPE OUT CAPE FYNBOS

18. (U) Table Mountain National Parks fire manager Phillip Prins stated that 11 homes were completely destroyed and almost 1,300 hectares of seven-year-old fynbos had been destroyed by three fires in the Western Cape Peninsula in late January. Two fire fighters suffered very serious burns. Prins said the three fires had been reported soon after they had started, however they later blazed out of control due to strong south-easterly winds. The fire manager is concerned that the fynbos may take too long to recover because it was too young when burned. Fynbos normally takes 12 to 15 years to recover. Prins and his colleagues suspect arson, and have asked the local police to investigate. He said it was the fourth Friday in a row that someone had reported a fire, and the reports were only 10

minutes apart. Another fire official added that it takes very dry grass to burn spontaneously and that the grass had not been dry enough to do that in January.

DIRECTOR GENERAL'S TIES WITH DEAT TO END

19. (U) Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) Marthinus Van Schalkwyk announced in January that DEAT Director General Pam Yako will not extend her contract with DEAT at the end of her tenure in April 2008. She has instead brought her departure date forward to February 29, 2008. Ms. Yako joined DEAT over six ago and had worked in DEAT in different capacities prior to being appointed Director General in 2005. The Minister credited Yako with the successful implementation of the Tourism Growth Strategy. He also stated that Yako had built a strong team of senior managers, strengthened biodiversity and conservation policies, and made the Marine Living Resources Fund much more effective. The Minister also cited other achievements, including addressing challenges faced by small-scale fisheries. The Minister expressed his appreciation for the Yako's integrity, dedication and loyalty to the DEAT. The process to appoint Yako's successor is underway, and the appointee could be named soon.

SA PREPARES FOR INSITE 2008

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10. (U) The Department of Science and Technology (DST) has begun preparations for Africa's premier science exhibition, the 3rd International Science, Innovation and Technology Exhibition (INSITE). INSITE is an international marketplace for innovation, science and technology (IST) where ideas, products, services and solutions in the context of long-term sustainability are exhibited. INSITE showcases solutions and demonstrates practical applications of science and technology. Institutions, governments and companies from around the world are invited. DST launched the first INSITE in 2004 and staged the second in 2006, drawing 5,889 and 6,298 visitors respectively. INSITE 2008 will be staged alongside the 25th International Association of Science Parks at the Sandton Convention Center, September 14 - 25, 2008.

UNSANITARY BUCKET SYSTEM PHASE-OUT UNDERWAY

11. (U) Provincial and Local Governments Deputy Director General Yusuf Patel told the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) that only 81 percent of the 252,254 unsanitary buckets used throughout South Africa were eradicated by the end of December 2007. The bucket system is still the most prevalent sanitation system in the Eastern Cape, Free State and North West provinces. The government had allocated over R1.8 billion (US \$ 260 million) in 2005/6 and 2006/7 to eradicate the bucket system and replace it with formal toilet structures. Patel said 62 percent of the toilet structures have been completed, although there were still some problems with running

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water. Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry Lindiwe Hendricks clarified that the bucket system eradication program was aimed at the formal townships only and not informal settlements.

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